

Darvill's pep-talk injects new spirit

Wycombe Wanderers 0, St. Albans City 0

AT a pre-match lecture, Wycombe Wanderers manager-coach Barry Darvill "read the riot act" to his team after two successive defeats. His pep-talk had the designed effect of injecting more spirit and determination into the side—qualities which have been sadly lacking during the past fortnight.

"They all knew they were fighting for their places tonight," commented Barry.

But for a sparkling show by 'keeper Fowler Wycombe would have certainly won. In a one-sided second half the St. Albans 'keeper saved his side as Wanderers pressed forward, striving for that morale-boosting victory.

Goalkeeper John Maskell missed his first game of the season and Gerhard Trini made his senior debut after only two matches with the reserves. He was, however, not seriously tested until mid-way through the second period.

On a wet and greasy surface St. Albans looked more likely to score in the first half with their players running off the ball to create space. But as was the case on both sides the final crucial pass always went astray.

Wanderers should have taken the lead after only nine minutes when Horseman was bundled off the ball by Bromley on the left of the box.

The referee pointed to the spot, without hesitation, at which he was surrounded by protesting St. Albans' players, who persuaded him to consult a linesman. But after consultations Mr. D. J. Burns stood by his earlier decision.

DOUBTFUL DECISION

It was, perhaps, justice that Tony Horseman—of all people—should place his kick too softly, allowing Fowler to dive and scramble the ball away. Certainly the decision looked doubtful as to whether the infringement took place inside the box.

Tony worked hard in order to make up for his unusual lapse and schemed from behind supplying both wingers with a number of good passes. Paul Bates, wearing the number nine shirt, was hardly in the middle, roamed everywhere and from one of his right wing crosses Samuels headed narrowly over just before the break.

In the second half the Wanderers pinned the City in their

own territory for nearly the whole 45 minutes. Bates nearly scored that elusive first goal in the 69th minute when he saw his fierce angled drive punched away by the leaping Fowler, with Holmes too slow to snap up the rebound.

When a side is continually attacking there is always a danger that they will be stretched at the back, and be caught by a brisk counter-attack. Wycombe supporters were given a scare when Trini was tested, punching out a long-range effort by Broomfield from just under the bar and coolly gathering Childs' header from the clearance. Trini was in action again when he went full-length to stop Butterfield's low shot.

However, the initiative was with Wycombe and they were soon back on the offensive. Fowler became the first goalkeeper in a senior match at Loakes Park to be penalised under the new four-step rule. Bates' free-kick was diverted for a corner from which Horseman headed in only for Fowler to make an incredible one handed save—more by instinct than design.

A few minutes before the end Les Merrick was knocked unconscious after heading a ball. Although Les soon recovered his action was an example of how Wycombe had fought to recover some of their lost pride.

Wycombe Wanderers: G. Trini; J. Beck, I. Rundle; B. Baker, V. Faulkner, C. Gale; L. Merrick, K. Samuels, P. Bates, A. Horseman, S. Holmes.